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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/697,084	10/31/2003	Tatsuhiko Tanimura	SHO-0051	9737

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EXAMINER	
THOMASSON, MEAGAN J	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3714	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/26/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/697,084	TANIMURA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Meagan Thomasson	3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *03 January 2007*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-9* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-9* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *31 October 2003* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1,2,4 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ozaki (US 2001/0031658) in view of Satoh (US 6,811,273).

Regarding claim 1, Ozaki et al. (US 2001/0031658) discloses a gaming machine comprising a liquid crystal display device including a liquid crystal display panel (Fig. 28, 24), and a light guiding plate disposed at the rear of the liquid crystal panel (Fig. 28, 25) for guiding light emitted from illumination means (Fig. 28, 26); and a variable display device disposed at a rear of the liquid crystal display device and including a plurality of reels provided in a row each on which a plurality of symbols are arranged (Fig. 28, 2). For a description of the components of Fig. 28, refer to paragraphs 0138 – 0139 of the

specification. The gaming machine disclosed by Ozaki does not feature cutouts or recesses formed in the light guiding plate of the LCD embodiment, and further the end faces of the cutouts are not being applied with a light scattering process. Ozaki does, however, disclose cutouts formed in the light guiding panel of the electroluminescent panel embodiment, as can be seen in Fig. 2 (27). Satoh discloses an illumination unit for reels of a slot machine, and discloses that an end face of a light guiding plate cutout is applied with a light scattering process (col. 4, lines 5-17; Figs. 1 and 2).

Regarding claims 2 and 7,Satoh discloses that an end face of the cutout or recess is formed in a shape to scatter light (Figs. 2 and 3).

Regarding claims 3 and 5, wherein a part of at least one of the plurality of reels is inserted into the cutout or recess

Regarding claims 4 and 6, Satoh discloses that an end face of the cutout or recess is configured to scatter light (Figs. 2 and 3).

Regarding claim 8, wherein the game machine further comprises a processor operable to perform an internal lottery game with a random number at a predetermined timing, stop at least one of the symbols of the variable display device based on the result of the internal lottery, and pay out a game medium to a player in a case where a stop state of the variable display device corresponds to a predetermined stop state, the invention disclosed by Ozaki is applied to a slot machine, where it is notoriously well known in the art that a processor controls a random number generation process and the outcome is then displayed to the player, and the player is awarded for any predetermined winning combination (Figs. 5-9).

Claims 3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ozaki (US 2001/0031658), Satoh et al. (US 6,811,273) and further in view of Weiss (US 6,623,006). The combination of the teachings of Ozaki and Satoh as described above disclose a gaming machine featuring a liquid crystal display device disposed in front of a plurality of slot machine reels, wherein the light guiding plate of the liquid crystal display device includes cutouts that are applied with a light scattering process. The combination of the Ozaki and Satoh references lack in disclosing that at least one of the plurality of reels is inserted into the cutout or recess. However, this feature is taught by Weiss, as can be seen is Fig. 3. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Ozaki, Satoh and Weiss due to their analogous inventions of slot machines featuring methods of enhancing displays in order to provide increased player enjoyment. In addition, the reels being inserted into the cutouts does not appear to present any immediate advantage over the invention disclosed by Ozaki and/or Satoh, wherein the reels are not inserted into the cutouts (as shown in Satoh Fig. 2; Ozaki Fig. 28), so long as the light guiding plate is in adequate proximity to the reels as to provide the intended illumination affect.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ozaki (US 2001/0031658), Satoh (US 6,811,273) and further in view of Niwa (US 6,790,140). The combination of the teachings of Ozaki and Satoh as described above disclose a gaming machine featuring a liquid crystal display device disposed in front of a plurality of slot machine reels, wherein the light guiding plate of the liquid crystal display

device includes cutouts that are applied with a light scattering process. The combination of the Ozaki and Satoh references lack in disclosing an operation unit that allows the player to input operation for stopping at least one of the symbols of the variable display device. However, this is taught by Niwa, in col. 2, lines 12-26, wherein a gaming machine features a player controlled stop operation in order to stop the rotation of the reels as desired by the player. Additionally, the player activated reel stop mechanism is a feature of slot machine type gaming devices that is notoriously well known in the art and does not render the instant invention new, novel, or unobvious. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Ozaki, Satoh and Niwa due to their analogous inventions, namely slot machines with additional features for enhancing player enjoyment.

Response to Amendment

The examiner acknowledges the addition of claims 4-9.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, filed January 3, 2007, with respect to the nonstatutory double patenting rejection of claims 1-3 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Specifically, applicant's argument that Okada (US 6,937,298) fails to claim the limitations describing the cutout and the application of light to the end face thereof has been found to be persuasive. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection of claims 1-3

has been withdrawn. However, the claims now stand rejected as being unpatentable over the prior art cited above.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Meagan Thomasson whose telephone number is (571) 272-2080. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 830-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bob Olszewski can be reached on (571) 272-6788. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Meagan Thomasson
February 21, 2007

ROBERT E. PEZZUTO
SUPERVISORY PRIMARY EXAMINER